



HOW TO BEAT THE BEAT GENERATION

My cousin Herkie Nylet is a sturdy lad of nineteen summers who has, we all believed until recently, a lively intelligence and an assured future. Herkie's father, Walter O. Nylet, is as everyone knows, president of the First National Artificial Cherry Company, world's largest maker of artificial cherries for ladies' hats. Uncle Walter had great plans for Herkie. Last year he sent Herkie to the Maryland College of Humanities, Sciences, and Artificial Cherries, and he intended, upon Herkie's graduation, to find him a nice fat wife and take him into the firm as a full partner.

Could a young man have more pleasing prospects? Of course not. But a couple of months ago, to everyone's consternation, Herkie announced that he was not going into the artificial cherry business. Nor was he going to stay in college. "I am," said Herkie, "a member of the Beat Generation. I am going to San Francisco and grow a beard."

Well sir, you can imagine the commotion in the family when Herkie went tramping off to San Francisco! Uncle Walter would have gone after him and dragged him home, but unfortunately he was right in the middle of the artificial cherry season. Aunt Thelma couldn't go either because of her old leg trouble. (One of her legs is older than the other.)

So I went. I searched San Francisco for weeks before I found Herkie living under the counter of a Pronto Pup stand. "Herkie, how are you?" I cried, looking distraughtly upon his tangled beard, his corduroy jacket, his stricken eyes.

"Beat," said Herkie.

I offered him a Marlboro and felt instantly better when he took it because when one smokes Marlboros, one cannot be too far removed from the world. One still has, so to speak, a hold on the finer

things of life—like good tobacco, like easy-drawing filtration, like settling back and getting comfortable and enjoying a full-flavored smoke. One is, despite all appearances, basically happiness-oriented, fulfillment-directed, pleasure-prone.

"Herkie, what are you doing with yourself?" I asked.

"I am finding myself," he replied. "I am writing a novel in the sand with a pointed stick. I am composing a fugue for clavier and police whistle. I am sculpting in experimental materials—like English muffins."

"And what do you do for fun?" I asked.

"Come," he said and took me to a dank little night club where men in beards and women in basic burlap sat on orange crates and drank espresso. On a tiny stage stood a poet reciting a free-form work of his own composition entitled *Excuse: The Story of a Boy* while behind him a jazz trio played 200 choruses of



"Herkie, how are you?"

Tin Roof Blues.

"Herkie," said I, "come home with me to the artificial cherries."

"No," said Herkie, so sadly I went home to tell Uncle Walter the bad news. He was less distressed than I had feared. It seems Uncle Walter has another son, a quiet boy named Edworts, about whom he had completely forgotten, and today Edworts is in business with Uncle Walter and Herkie is beat in San Francisco, and everyone is happy.

© 1961 Max Shulman

And you too will be happy—with Marlboros, or if you prefer an unfiltered smoke, with Philip Morris. Try the brand-new Philip Morris king-size Commander—long, mild, and leisurely. Have a Commander—welcome aboard!